

פרשת
בא
Parashat Bo

*Shemot / Exodus 10:1-13:16, Jer. 46:13-28
Mark 3:7-19*

**The Lord God Almighty as both a Redeemer
and a Destroyer**

This week's Torah portion opens with *Shemot / Exodus 10:1-2*, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה כִּי-אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לְבָבוֹ וְאֶת-לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שַׁתִּי אֶתְּחִי אֵלָה בְּקִרְבּוֹ: ב וּלְמַעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵי וְכֹן-בְּנֵי אֶת אֲשֶׁר 10:1 הִתְעַלְלֹתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-אֶתְחִי אֲשֶׁר-שַׁמְתִּי בָם וַיִּדְעֻתָם כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוָה: *Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, 10:2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.'* (NASB) We note how the Hebrew text is written, the Lord God of Israel speaks the words הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לְבָבוֹ "I have hardened his heart" using the word כִּבֵּד, a verb meaning "be heavy, weighty, burdensome, honoured." When looking at the use of the word כִּבֵּד to describe what the Lord God has done, I am reminded of the Niphal verb form meaning of כִּבֵּד "to get oneself glory or honour, gain glory." The use of this word may suggest how the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, by causing Pharaoh to glory in himself, he was prideful! This is a very

likely path to hardening of the heart that took place up until the very end of the plagues God brought upon Egypt. The last plague was the death of the first born where the Lord God established the Passover. The Torah states the following, *Shemot / Exodus 12:12-14* יב וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה וְהִפִּיתִי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעַשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אָנֹכִי יְהוָה: יג וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֵת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שָׁם וְרָאִיתִי אֶת-הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם וְלֹא-יְהִי בָכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחִית בְּהַכְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: יד וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן וְחֻגְתֶּם אֹתוֹ: 12:12 *‘For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments I am the Lord. 12:13 ‘The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 12:14 ‘Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. (NASB)* It is interesting how the Torah states that the Lord God Himself will go throughout the land of Egypt (בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם) and strike down all the first born (כָּל-בְּכוֹר), of both man and beast. We note again how the Hebrew text is written. The Lord God is not sending a “messenger” to do this work of striking down all the first born. The Hebrew text states וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה “and I will go through the land of Egypt this night.” This whole paragraph is meant to be something that Moshe tells to all of Israel. Now because of this, it would be expected that the text would have said וְעָבַר בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם “and He will go through the land of Egypt,” rather than וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם “and I will go through the land of Egypt.” (Rabbeinu Bahya, *Shemot / Exodus 12:12 Part 1*) The emphasis on the ending וְעָבַרְתִּי on תִּי teaches us something about God, that He personally and not any agent or messenger would execute all of the first born children. *Sforno on Shemot / Exodus 12:12 Part 1* explain וְעָבַרְתִּי, in the sense of *Tehillim / Psalms 78:50* יִפְלֹס נְתִיב לְאַפוֹ, “He cleared a path for His anger,” note the context and *Tehillim / Psalms 78:51* נִיגַד כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּמִצְרַיִם (ם) “He struck every first-born in Egypt”) this Psalm is referring back

to this text in *Shemot / Exodus 12:12*. What Sforno is pointing out is what an angel could not do and only God could do, as being able to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. The rabbis phrase this as saying, "אני ולא מלאך, אני ולא שרף, אני ולא השליח, אני ה", "I and not an angel; I and not a Saraph (an angel); I and not someone whom I usually delegate such a task to; I, all by Myself." The point is based upon the text, the Lord God is saying that he will not delegate this task to anyone else. It was in this way that God personally both delivered Israel and put to death her enemies! Another way of saying this is that The Lord God Almighty functions as both a Redeemer and a Destroyer, depending upon whose side you're on!

The Scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Shemot / Exodus 12:1-12*.

ספר שמות פרק יב

א ויאמר יהוה אל-משה ואל-אהרן בארץ מצרים לאמר:
 ב החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי
 השנה: ג דברו אל-כל-עדת ישראל לאמר בעשר לחדש
 הזה ויקחו להם איש ששה לבית-אבת ששה לבית: ד ואם-
 ימעט הבית מהיות משה ולקח הוא ושכנו הקרב אל-ביתו
 במכסת נפשות איש לפי אכלו תכסו על-הששה: ה ששה
 תמים זכר בן-שנה יהיה לכם מן-הכבשים ומן-העזים
 תקחו: ו והיה לכם למשמרת עד ארבעה עשר יום לחדש
 הזה ושחטו אתו כל קהל עדת-ישראל בין הערבים:
 ז ולקחו מן-הדם ונתנו על-שתי המזוזות ועל-המשקוף
 על הבתים אשר-יאכלו אתו בהם: ח ואכלו את-הבשר
 בלילה הזה צלי-אש ומצות על-מרים יאכלהו: ט אל-
 תאכלו ממנו גא ובשל מבשל במים פי אם-צלי-אש ראשו
 על-כרעיו ועל-קרבו: י ולא-תותרו ממנו עד-בקר
 והנותר ממנו עד-בקר באש תשרפו: יא וככה תאכלו אתו
 מתניכם חגרים ועליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידיכם ואכ-
 לתם אתו בחפזון פסח הוא ליהוה: יב ועברתי בארץ-
 מצרים בלילה הזה והפיתי כל-בכור בארץ מצרים מאדם
 ועד-בהמה ובכל-אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים אני יהוה: יג

וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֹת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם שָׂם וְרָאִיתִי
אֶת-הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא-יְהִיָּה בְכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחַת
בְּהַכְּתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: יד וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן
וְחֻגָתֶם אֲתוּ חַג לַיהוָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם תִּחְגַּגְהוּ:

Shemot / Exodus 12:1-14

12:1 Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 12:2 ‘This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. 12:3 ‘Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household. 12:4 ‘Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. 12:5 ‘Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 12:6 ‘You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. 12:7 ‘Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 12:8 ‘They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12:9 ‘Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. 12:10 ‘And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. 12:11 ‘Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste it is the Lord’s Passover. 12:12 ‘For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and

beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments I am the Lord. 12:13 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 12:14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. (NASB)

The Hebrew bible states expressly that the Lord God of Israel went in to destroy the first born. It seems that the Lord God in His love for Israel personally both delivered Israel and put to death her enemies! Nachmanides is more of a rationalist and tries to say that God did employ an assistant in the sense of a messenger. However, if this had been the case His delegates would not have been able to distinguish between Jewish and Egyptian firstborns seeing that from the vantage point of that attribute they had not deserved to be saved. (*Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot / Exodus 12:12 Part 2*) This is quite an interesting conclusion! This is a rabbinic way of saying the children of Israel had “*unmerited favor,*” and that it was because of the Promises of God they were saved tied to the Passover. This is the argument the Rabbis give on why God Himself had to carry out the plague (striking down the first born). In addition to this, Rashi, quotes from the Mechilta to also explain that “*on all the deities of Egypt I shall execute judgments*” which is stated explicitly in the text, וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה, יְהוָה יְהוָה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְהוָה. (*Shemot / Exodus 12:12*) This is also how the Talmud portrays these verse.

Talmud Bavli Sukkah 29a:12

The Sages said: There is no nation that is afflicted whose god is not afflicted with it, as it is stated: “And against all the gods of Egypt I will mete out judgment; I am God” (Exodus 12:12). The Gemara adds: When the Jewish people perform God’s will, they need not fear any of these omens, as it is stated: “Thus says the Lord: Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dis-

mayed at the signs of Heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them” (Jeremiah 10:2). The nations will be dismayed, but the Jewish people will not be dismayed, provided they do not follow the ways of the nations.

We note how the Lord God personally came down from heaven to deliver His people and destroy the gods of Egypt. This is the meaning of the phrase, writing **ואני הוא ולא אחר**, “*I alone and no one else.*” This expression explains all that has been written before, i.e. why in this instance God personally meted out the punishment for sin as opposed to an angel, i.e. as in the example when an angel killed 185,000 men of Sancherib’s army all in the same night without assistance. (*2 Kings 19:35*)

When discussing the topic of both redeemer and destroyer, this things reminds me of what is written according to the book of Joshua.

ספר יהושע פרק כ

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר תָּנוּ לָכֶם אֶת-עָרֵי הַמְּקֻלָּט אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה: ג לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה רוֹצֵחַ מִכָּה-נִפְשׁ בְּשִׁגְגָה בְּבִלִי-דַעַת וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְמִקְלָט מִגֹּאֵל הַדָּם:

Joshua 20:1-3

20:1 Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, 20:2 ‘Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, 20:3 that the manslayer who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there, and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood. (NASB)

It is interesting how the text is written, **לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה רוֹצֵחַ מִכָּה-נִפְשׁ בְּשִׁגְגָה** “*that the manslayer who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there, and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood.*” The word **goel** (גֹּאֵל) here means “*to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge,*

revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman” What these things speak to us about is concerning the redeemer, the goel (גֹּאֵל) can function as both a redeemer and an avenger or destroyer, just as we are seeing here in this week’s Torah Portion in relation to God Himself! These things are consistent with the NT account of the Lord God Almighty and His goel (גֹּאֵל) Yeshua the Messiah. Many references may be found in the NT, the following are just a couple to illustrate this point from *2 Thessalonians 1:5-12* and *Revelation 6:9-11*.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

1:5 This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 1:6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 1:7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 1:9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 1:10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed for our testimony to you was believed. 1:11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 1:12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NASB)

Revelation 6:9-11

6:9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 6:10 and they cried

out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' 6:11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also. (NASB)

The thing to note and the point of this article is in relation to the NT account of Yeshua as our goel (גֹּאֵל, redeemer). The NT also states that Yeshua is our avenger as well as we see according to *2 Thessalonians 1:5-12*. It is also important to know how the NT text is consistent with Torah using these Torah centric principles of who God is, and who the Messiah of God is as He lovingly delivers and protects us.

Isaiah speaks the following to Israel in regards to the fear of the Lord saying according to *Isaiah 8:13-16*:

ספר ישעיה פרק ח

יג אַתְּ-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אַתּוֹ תְקַדִּישׁוּ וְהוּא מוֹרְאָכֶם וְהוּא מִ-
עֲרֹצְכֶם: יד וְהָיָה לְמִקְדָּשׁ וּלְאָבוֹן נִגְף וּלְצוּר מְכֻשׁוֹל לְשָׂנֵי
בְּמִי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְחָ וּלְמוֹקֵשׁ לְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: טו וְכָשְׁלוּ בָם
רְבִים וְנָפְלוּ וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנִקְשְׁוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ: טז צוּר תַּעֲוֹדָה
חֲתוּם תּוֹרָה בְּלִמְדֵי:

Isaiah 8:13-16

8:13 'It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread. 8:14 'Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 8:15 'Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught.' 8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. (NASB)

Isaiah states the following, אַת-יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת אַתּוֹ תִקְדִּישׁוּ וְהוּא מוֹרְאָכֶם, וְהוּא מַעֲרָצְכֶם “*It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread.*” Isaiah uses the words מוֹרְאָ meaning “*fear*” and עֲרָץ meaning “*to cause to tremble, in terror.*” Isaiah goes on to speak of the Lord Himself becoming a sanctuary (a mishkhan) and that He will be both a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over and a snare to trap. These things are coupled to what Isaiah says in 8:16, צוֹר תְּעוּדָה חֲתוּם תּוֹרָה בְּלִמְדֵי, “*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples*” We note how the Torah is coupled to all of these things. The people of Israel as this time was living their in a lawless manner. When doing this just as Isaiah said, the Lord is to be feared! Yeshua emphasizes the significance of not having God’s Torah in our lives saying “*depart from me you working of lawlessness*” (Matthew 7:23). These things speak to the significance of the Torah (instruction of God) in our lives, and highlights the dangers of modern theologies that teach man is not responsible to the commands of God as being a child in His house! Modern theologies promote the idea that Paul taught contrary to Moshe. Based upon the Torah and elsewhere, this would make Paul a heretic. We read according to the Torah the following, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:18*, יח נְבִיא אֲקִים לָהֶם מִקֶּרֶב אֲחֵיהֶם כְּמוֹהוּ וְנִתְתִי דְבָרֵי דְבָרֵי בְפִיו וְדָבַר אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶנּוּ: יט וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשְׁמַע אֶל-דְּבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּר בְּשֵׁמִי אֲנֹכִי אֲדַרְשׁ מֵעַמּוֹ: כ אִם הִנְבִּיא אֲשֶׁר יִזִּיד לְדַבֵּר דְּבָר בְּשֵׁמִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-צִוִּיתִיו לְדַבֵּר וְאֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּר בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וּמַת הִנְבִּיא הֵהוּא: 18:18 כֹּא וְכִי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ אֵיכָה נִדְעֵ אֶת-הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-דִבְרוּ יְהוָה: *‘I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 18:19 ‘It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. 18:20 ‘But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ 18:21 ‘You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ 18:22 ‘When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptu-*

ously; you shall not be afraid of him. (NASB) These verses describe the נביא שקר false prophet as the one who presume to speak for the Lord while speaking contrary to the Torah. This is what modern theologies today teach (i.e. dispensationalism, etc). The real question we should ask ourselves is whether we are believing and teaching a theology or are we believing and teaching what is actually written in the Word of God? This week's Torah portion illustrates how the Lord Almighty is the one we are to regard as holy, He is the one we are to fear, He is the one we are to dread (*Isaiah 8:13*) and is connected to whether we are binding or not binding His Torah (instruction) to our lives. (*Isaiah 8:16*) We note the parallels to the goel (גֹּאֵל, redeemer), to God, and to the Messiah, in both the Tanakh and the NT as being both a redeemer and a destroyer. Can we excuse this as only for Old Testament times which is the typical and principle conclusion? Isaiah inspired by God goes on to say in the next verse that He (God) will be a sanctuary, but for those who do not know Him and do not keep His Words, He will be "a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." (*Isaiah 8:14*) The heart of our faith is to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and the work that He has done on our behalf to save us from our sins. Salvation as we see here in this week's Torah portion is "unmerited favor;" there is nothing we can do without God's help, this includes even having faith and having love for God and His Word! And if we are seeking the Lord God Almighty and His Son Yeshua, believing in the promises of God, and asking the Lord to work and live in and through us according to His Word, helping us to order our lives according to His Word, we can be assured that He will be with us. We can also be assured that the Lord is our salvation, He is our redeemer, and not our destroyer!